

January 7, 2008

Honorable Julia Patterson, Chairperson
Metropolitan King County Council
King County Courthouse, 12th Floor
516 3rd Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Chairperson Patterson:

I am pleased to transmit to the Council the Executive's final response to King County Council Ordinance 15869 adopted by the Council on July 17, 2007. This ordinance emerged from the overwhelming public response to the Council's May 2007 Town Hall on the health of Puget Sound. When we began this process several years ago in collaboration with the Governor, I made a commitment that King County would be a model local government for addressing our impacts to the health of Puget Sound and we would aggressively pursue recovery and protection of our national treasure. The development of this detailed extensive report is an excellent first step toward that commitment.

As was discussed during the Council's review of the draft response transmitted on September 16, 2007, the region is anxious to get going on the tough work ahead of us to develop and begin implementation of the 2020 Action Agenda. The primary focus of the preliminary report was the review of what has been done to date on Puget Sound Recovery and how the Executive branch would work with the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) to complete the work on the final response by January 1, 2008. However, as with any large and complicated new initiative, we are also respectful of the responsibilities and timeline of the newly established state agency to lead this effort – The Puget Sound Partnership.

As of this date, the Leadership Council and David Dicks, the new Executive Director, have been busy on their transition from the Puget Sound Action Team, which was part of the Governor's Office, into a new state agency -- the Puget Sound Partnership. They most recently completed the appointment of the Ecosystem Coordination Board (ECB) and the Science Advisory Panel that were called out in the state legislation to play an integral role in development and implementation of the 2020 Action Agenda. I am proud to have been appointed to represent the South Central Puget Sound Action Area on the ECB and, most recently, elected by the ECB to serve as the chair. In addition to my leadership role, David St. John, from the Department of Natural Resources and Parks is on loan to the Puget Sound Partnership as a core team member assigned to manage the development of the Action Agenda for the Partnership.

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Last month, I was pleased to participate in a very successful multi-watershed assembly that included stakeholders and representatives from all four of the Water Resource Inventory Areas (WRIA's) that include parts of King County. In order to address the Council's request for a multi-jurisdictional gathering to discuss Puget Sound recovery, we helped to incorporate a Puget Sound Partnership component into the watershed assembly agenda. In addition to David Dicks, the new Executive Director of the PSP, also joining me were Dan Wrye (Pierce County) and Gary Rowe (Skagit County), the ECB members from the South Puget Sound Action Area and the Whidbey Basin Action Area. Substantive recommendations on how to effectively incorporate the salmon recovery efforts with the overall Puget Sound recovery effort were discussed in detail. I believe the assembly reflected the pride the WRIA's feel in their achievements to date and also their enthusiasm for infusing new attention and resources in the salmon recovery effort as a critical component of Puget Sound recovery.

In order to organize the report to best integrate our work with the 2020 Action Agenda effort underway by the Partnership, we have assessed our ability to address the five immediate action areas requested by the Governor in December 2006. The immediate actions are as follows:

1. Identify and address areas with immediate septic problems
2. Protect Puget Sound habitat
3. Implement priority projects to restore damaged forests, rivers, shorelines and marine waters
4. Accelerate control and clean-up of toxic pollution
5. Significantly reduce polluted stormwater runoff

The subsections of the report briefly describe the issues – both regionally and in King County – that are prompting immediate action in each area. Each subsection then outlines what the County is currently doing in each area; what the County intends to do in coming years; and what technical, data and regulatory gaps must be addressed to implement these immediate actions. This compilation is an important step in meeting King County's goal of Puget Sound recovery and serving as a model for other counties and cities working to improve the health of Puget Sound.

I am honored to play a leadership role for King County as Chair of the ECB of the Puget Sound Partnership. I am also pleased that the County Council will have two staff persons, Mike Reed and Jennifer Giambattista, as members of our Puget Sound Team, working collaboratively with the Executive branch on the County's recovery and protection effort. We welcome their expertise and ability to ensure the Council is an active partner in our efforts.

Again, I look forward to working closely with the Council as we chart our course to be a model local government for recovering and protecting the Sound. I hope you are as impressed as I am with the outstanding work done by staff on this extensive report. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff with your thoughts regarding our work on the Puget Sound recovery effort. Maura Brueger, Senior Advisor for Federal Relations is

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the lead in the Executive's Office for the Puget Sound Partnership effort. She can be reached at 206-296-4001 or email at maura.brueger@kingcounty.gov.

Warmest regards,

Ron Sims

Cc: King County Council

Att: Ross Baker, Chief of Staff, King County Council

Mike Reed, Legislative Lead Analyst, King County Council

Theresa Jennings, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)

Mark Isaacson, Director, Water and Land Resources Division, (WLRD), DNRP

Randy Shuman, Manager, Science, Monitoring and Data Management Section,
WLRD, DNRP

Kurt Triplett Chief of Staff, Executive Office

Maura Brueger, Senior Advisor for Federal Relations, Executive Office

De'Sean Quinn, Council Relations Director, Executive Office

David Dicks, Executive Director, Puget Sound Partnership